



YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY
SKILLS NETWORK

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT FY 2014

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS NETWORK

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALMM	Active Labor Market Measures
BDE	Bureau for Development of Education
CC	Career Centers
COP	Chief of party
DPO	Disabled Persons Organization
EDC	Education Development Center Inc.
ESA	Employment Service Agency
ESC	Economic-Social Council
JC	Job Clubs
LESC	Local Economic and Social Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PEP	Primary Education Project
PMP	Performance Measurement Plan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WRS	Work readiness skills
WBL	Work-based learning
WRN!	Work Ready Now!
YES	Youth Employability Skills
YLC	Youth Leadership Council
YWD	Youth with disabilities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Youth employability skills (YES) Network Project finalized its fourth year of implementation, having one more to its completion. Its goal is to better prepare the youth for the job market as a response to the worrying findings that many young people in Macedonia are long-term unemployed and lack employability and work-related skills and attitudes. The Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network, implemented by the US based Education Development Center (EDC), and funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), is a five-year project aiming to enhance the employability skills of youth in Macedonia. The project targets students in their final year in Macedonia's secondary schools, both vocational education and training (VET) schools and gymnasiums; unemployed registrants with the Employment Service Agency (ESA); and out-of-school, unregistered and unemployed youth, aged 15-27. The project works directly with secondary school teachers, staff from the local ESA centers and NGOs that work with unemployed young people. Selected staff from these institutions is trained to be facilitators for the YES Work Readiness Skills (WRS) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) curricula. Selected number of teachers from each school was trained for implementation of the Career Planning (CP) Program. Through this program they will be able to provide career guidance and advice to the young people so they will be able to make informed and adequate career choices. The Project scope was enriched in FY 2013 by establishing a new component – *Inclusion of youth with disabilities in the YES Network activities* – with the grant that the Project won through a competitive process organized by USAID worldwide. Within this component all three core curricula (WRES, WBL and CP) have been adapted to be used in an inclusive environment with all youth groups. The unifying efforts towards overcoming the gap on the local labor markets are reflected in the Local Economic and Social Councils (LESCs) as bodies of the Municipalities where the private-public dialogue (PPD) is taking place. This is a tri-partite body that brings together the employers, the employees and the state representatives to discuss jointly relevant issues for the local community. YES is making efforts to secure participation of youth in the Councils so their perspective on the issue will be considered and will be able to make an influence on the initiatives that LESC will propose to the Municipality.

YES Network's objectives are:

- Objective 1: Facilitate Public-Private Dialogue that will improve local level demand-supply labor exchange at the local level.
- Objective 2: Strengthen the capacities of NGOs and DPOs for development of employability skills in youth.
- Objective 3: Strengthen the capacity of the Employment Services Agency to provide better services to registered unemployed youth, including youth with disabilities, such as training in work-readiness skills, access to structured work-based learning opportunities, and up-to-date information on job openings and career development opportunities.
- Objective 4: Provide continuing professional development opportunities for teachers in secondary schools.
- Objective 5: Create innovative mechanisms to make secondary schools and the VET Center more responsive and relevant.
- Objective 6: Integrate productive connections with current and planned USAID and other donor workforce related activities.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

By the end of the fourth year of YES Network implementation the third internal annual evaluation has been performed, informing the project about its achievements and challenges. The annual evaluations are targeted towards all major project activities, organized within four components – (1) Public private dialogue, (2) Labor market, (3) Vocational training and (4) Inclusion of youth with disabilities - and three main programs – Work readiness skills (WRS), Work-based learning (WBL) and Career planning (CP). The data is gathered from all participants in the process, the direct beneficiaries - teachers, ESA employees, NGO facilitators, as well as the indirect - secondary school students, unemployed youth, both registered and unregistered at ESA. Multiple methods have been used in order to triangulate the findings, such as paper-based and online surveys, focus groups, workshop/class observations and interviews.

The findings throughout the three years of measurement show consistent progress towards the set objectives. Also, the positive attitude of the beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, is a promising factor regarding the sustainability of the implementation of the project activities after its end. Still, the findings are alerting regarding the sustainability of the activities that require certain amount of resources and organization efforts.

Namely, the biggest project successes could be summarized in the following lines:

- The project has established basis for the public-private dialogue on a local level, by establishing of a Local economic and social council in each of the six partner municipalities and the City of Skopje. They have all been supported by a series of capacity building activities and all of them have initiated and implemented a local labor market analysis, public debates on locally relevant topics, such as youth employment, green jobs etc.
- Three basic curricula relating to youth employment have been developed to address the burning issues in the youth preparation for the future jobs in Macedonia: Work readiness skills (WRS), Work-based learning (WBL) and Career planning (CP). All three have been approved and adopted by the Vocational and education (VET) Center, the responsible institution for the VET schools, operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of education and science (MoES). Also, two of them, WRS and WBL programs, were adapted to be used in heterogeneous groups, including youth with disabilities. The third one will be adapted in the final project year. Besides these, two additional programs have been created: Mentors in companies – for establishing a solid basis for meaningful internships, and Externships for teachers in order to be in the loop with the latest technologies and processes in their field of expertise.
- All three programs have been implemented in the secondary schools:

Three years in a row (2012/13/14) the **WRS program** has been implemented in the schools, either as a full 72-school hours program through the form of free classes, or as integrated sections in the existing subjects. The evaluation findings show that in average 47% of the trained teachers implement the program each year, through at least one of these forms, encompassing 4,158 students completing the entire program through the free classes and 23,704 students participating in selected program activities integrated in various regular subjects.

WBL program has been implemented in the partnering schools throughout two years (2013/14) as a 66- school hours program through the free classes or integrated in the existing subject - Practical instruction, by 50% of the trained teachers, encompassing 1,360 who completed the entire program and 1,839 students participating in selected activities of the program within the Practical instruction subject.

During 2014 **CP program** was implemented for the first time in the schools as a full 72- school hours program in the VET schools and as a 33-classes program in the Gymnasiums, integrated in the existing subjects or individually. 82% of the trained teachers implemented the program, encompassing 565 students through the free classes, 938 through integration during the regular classes and 287 students participated in the process of individual career counseling outside the instruction. Another 333 students participated in group career counseling outside the instruction.

- WRS and WBL workshops have been included in the Operational plan of the Employment service agency (ESA) which is a serious step towards the sustainability of the programs after project ends. During three years of implementation 1,533 young unemployed and registered at ESA persons completed the programs. Based on the request of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy, ESA staff from additional 16 ESA centers was trained to deliver WRS program to unemployed youth. It means that now, the WRS workshops to unemployed youth have been delivering in 23 out of 30 ESA centers that exists in Macedonia.
- NGOs and DPOs have delivered WRS training to 243 unemployed and unregistered at ESA young persons, 13 being youth with disabilities.
- In average, 82% of all three groups of youth completing the WRS program report on improvement of their employability skills.
- YES Network has also invested in creation of venues for delivering workforce related activities by upgrading/establishing seven Job Clubs in the ESA Centers and 37 Career centers in the secondary schools. These venues have been actively used for the implementation of the three programs, but also for other activities of the students, such as presentations, preparations for competitions etc.
- After the workshops, throughout the three years, 591 young person got employment (33% of all trained youth through ESA and NGPs/DPOs). Out of them, four are persons with disabilities.
- During FY 2014 the Project has developed a Battery of instruments for professional orientation tests (BIPO), which is the first locally developed and standardized tool for professional orientation in the country. It will be used by professionals in the schools and ESA Centers to help the young people they work with to explore their professional interest, working values and personal characteristics, in order to get information for which professions they show affinity.

The major challenges that the project partners face throughout the three years of implementation, reported by the facilitators (teachers and ESA employees), refer to the lack of financial and human resources as well as to the organizational difficulties. These issues need to be addressed locally, therefore the project will organize presentations and discussion groups for representatives of the relevant local institutions, such as: schools, municipalities, ESA Centers etc.

Following issues need more attention from USAID and MoES:

1. There is a need for additional support to the trained teachers for the Career planning program, in order to be able to master the skills needed for this very responsible call of a career counselor. In order to strengthen the capacities of the schools to provide career counseling services to the students YES Network has initially agreed with MoES to train the school psychologists from the schools for the program;

2. In the systematization of job positions there is no career counselor, thus the trained teachers and ESA employees cannot hold that title even if they have been implementing the program.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The annual evaluation was designed in order to provide relevant evidence for the status of the set objectives. Namely, the evaluation answers to the following key questions for the period of FY 2014:

- 1) Are the young people (secondary school students, unemployed registered at ESA and unemployed, out-of-school and unregistered at ESA) improving their employability skills after participating in YES Network programs (WRS, WBL and CP)?
- 2) Are the capacities of the YES Network partnering institutions strengthened (secondary schools, ESA Centers and NGOs/DPOs)?
- 3) Are the LSCs functioning bodies for public-private dialogue?

The evaluation is performed using a convenience sample with intention to acquire as higher number of respondents as possible. However, wherever it was possible the whole population was involved, such as LSCs and ESA Centers. Another data limitation refers to the fact that most of the data is obtained through self-reporting techniques. This is the first annual evaluation addressing this limitation by introducing the WRN! test to a small sample of youth (33) trained through ESA Centers, providing an objective measure of improvement in the employability skills.

KEY FINDINGS

Table 2. Presentation of the key evaluation findings related to the performance indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGETS FY14	ACTUALS FY14
YES NETWORK GOAL: To enhance the employability skills of youth in Macedonia		
Standard indicator 4.6.3-2 Number of persons receiving new employment or better employment (including better self-employment) as a result of participation in USG-funded workforce development programs.	140	390
Standard indicator 4.6.3-9 Person hours of training completed in workforce development supported by USG assistance.	130,840	207,357
Standard indicator 4.6.3-10 Number of days of USG funded technical assistance in workforce development provided to counterparts or stakeholders.	539	398
Custom Outcome Percentage of youth reporting on improved level of employability skills	40%	80% (WRS - All) ¹ 90% (WBL- Students) ² 73% (WBL- ESA youth) ³

¹ 941 out of 1179 surveyed youth that participated in WRS program (223 out of 293 surveyed youth trained through ESA centers; 718 out of 886 surveyed students)

² 315 out of 349 surveyed secondary school students that participated in WBL program

³ 115 out of 157 surveyed youth trained through ESA centers in WBL program

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGETS FY14	ACTUALS FY14
		94% (WRN! – ESA youth) ⁴
IR1: Demand-Supply labor exchange at the local level improved through Public-Private dialogue		
1.1. Number of Local Economic and Social Councils (LESC) functioning	4 (1 from Skopje and 3 from additional municipalities)	All 7 are functioning
IR2: Capacities of NGOs and DPOs for development of employability skills in youth (including YWDs) strengthened		
2.1. Local youth NGOs and DPOs provide career related services to number of unemployed, unregistered and out of school youth, including youth with disabilities	140	35 (It was decided that grants will be awarded only for inclusive groups. The implementation started later in the year)
IR3: Capacities of ESA centers for development of employability skills in youth (including YWDs) strengthened		
3.1. Number of Job clubs (JC) functioning	3 (from additional municipalities)	All 7 are functioning
3.2. Number of unemployed youth participating in career related workshops delivered by ESA staff	560	718
IR4: Relevance and responsiveness of Secondary Schools and VET Center increased, including continuing professional development for secondary schools		
4.1. Number of Career centers (CC) functioning	11 (in 11 new municipalities)	All 38 are functioning
4.2 Percentage of trained secondary school teachers implementing career related activities both through the free classes and integrated in the existing subjects.	40%	49% (WRS) ⁵ 50% (WBL) ⁶ 82% (CP) ⁷
4.3. Number of curricula developed by YES Network Project adopted by the relevant institutions.	0	0

⁴ During this year, 33 unemployed youth from three ESA Centers - Bitola, Strumica and Skopje, took the WRN! test as part of the international pilot testing of the newly developed instrument by EDC. Most of them, 31 (94%), successfully passed the test and received a certificate that is internationally recognized.

⁵ 151 out of 311 trained teachers from all 7 municipalities implement WRS. Out of them, 7% implement it during 'free classes', 31% through integration and 11% use both approaches.

⁶ 51 out of 102 trained teachers from 6 municipalities (Skopje not included) implement WBL (19% deliver WBL in the free classes; 27% integrate parts of WBL in the existing classes; 4% use both approaches)

⁷ 62 out of 76 trained teachers from 6 municipalities (Skopje not included) implement CP through various approaches. One teacher may implement it through more than one approach: individual counseling outside the instruction (77%); extra-curricular group counseling (27%); Integrated into the existing subjects (27%); group counseling through free classes/project activity (24%).

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGETS FY14	ACTUALS FY14
4.4. Number of students completing the elective courses based on the new curricula (WrS, WbL and CP)	2,200	3,263 ⁸

⁸ This number includes 1740 students completing WRS, 958 WBL and 565 CP programs implemented during free classes in FY2014

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IR1: Demand-Supply labor exchange at the local level improved through Public-Private dialogue

Conclusions

All seven partnering municipalities have established local bodies for public-private dialogue and all of them have representatives participating in the capacities building activities provided by the YES Network Project. The level of their functioning differs from each other - a higher level functioning is observed where the leadership is stronger and more dedicated, demonstrating a proactive attitude.

Shared challenge among the LESC is the low level of motivation on the part of the members outside of the Municipality. All LESC still need support from the YES Network, to initiate and lead the public-private dialogue on issues related to the demand-supply labor exchange.

Recommendations

YES Network continues to support the LESC in their forming and advancing process of public-private dialogue. This support could be offered in a form of facilitation of the process of taking initiatives for more meaningful dialogue and for creating written recommendations to the Municipal Council for improving the demand-supply labor exchange at the local level.

Also, the support could be provided by networking among the LESC in the country and with other LESC from the region.

IR2: Capacities of NGOs and DPOs for development of employability skills in youth (including YWDs) strengthened

Conclusion

In each of the seven partner municipalities there are NGOs and/or DPOs facilitators who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools for implementation of the Work readiness skills program, adapted for inclusion of youth with disabilities. The first results from this capacity building endeavors were seen in Skopje, where three inclusive groups of trainees successfully participated in the inclusive program, followed by eight employments.

Even though the NGOs and DPOs provide high quality training to the young people that are out of the system, they do not have assured finances for implementing the WRS workshops, which risks the sustainability of this part of the project achievements.

Recommendations

- YES Network to continue supporting the local NGOs and DPOs implement inclusive WRS workshops on a local level.
- To create links between the non-governmental sector and the municipalities in order to secure sustainability of the inclusive workshops by the NGOs and DPOs.

IR3: Capacities of ESA centers for development of employability skills in youth (including YWDs) strengthened

Conclusions

The capacities of ESA Centers for development of employability skills in youth, including youth with disabilities have been strengthened throughout this year with new knowledge and skills on career planning, use of assistive technology and inclusive WRS program. Also, all seven Job clubs were upgraded with a set of assistive technology for use by youth with disabilities in inclusive groups.

Recommendations

- To strengthen facilitation skills where necessary or to support the facilitation of the workshops with external facilitators.
- To assure the implementation of the WRS, WBL and CP programs in inclusive groups and the use of the assistive technology whenever it is possible.

IR4: Relevance and responsiveness of Secondary Schools and VET Center increased, including continuing professional development for secondary schools

Conclusions

Professional development of teachers in the area of workforce development was provided continuously during this year. Teachers got training in inclusive Work readiness skills and Work-based learning programs, as well as in Assistive technology. Also, new groups of teachers have been trained in Career planning program. They were supported through the mentoring sessions and visited in class by the VET advisors. Their experience in the implementation of both programs is very positive, because of the observed benefits for the students. However, they continue to face the same challenges as the previous years, all related to organizational and resources factors, such as students' transportation, financial support for providing the needed materials for the activities, overloaded schedules. Because of this, preferred approach for implementation of the programs with the students is the integration of the activities in the existing subjects. Specific challenges related to the full implementation of the WBL curriculum are the resources needed for its implementation in the companies (transportation costs and extra time) and the willingness of the employers to collaborate.

Recommendations

- To identify on the municipal and the school level the most appropriate approaches for each school to implement the curricula with the students taking into account the organizational and financial challenges.
- To identify ways of cooperation between schools and employers for successful implementation of the Work-based learning curriculum.

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THE YES NETWORK PROJECT CONTEXT

Youth employability skills (YES) Network Project finalized its fourth year of implementation, having one more to its completion. Its goal is to better prepare the youth for the job market as a response to the worrying findings that many young people in Macedonia are long-term unemployed and lack employability and work-related skills and attitudes. The Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network, implemented by the US based Education Development Center (EDC), and funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), is a five-year project aiming to enhance the employability skills of youth in Macedonia. The project targets students in their final year in Macedonia's secondary schools, both vocational education and training (VET) schools and gymnasiums; unemployed registrants with the Employment Service Agency (ESA); and out-of-school, unregistered and unemployed youth, aged 15-27. The project works directly with secondary school teachers, staff from the local ESA centers and NGOs that work with unemployed young people. Selected staff from these institutions is trained to be facilitators for the YES Work Readiness Skills (WRS) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) curricula. Selected number of teachers from each school was trained for implementation of the Career Planning (CP) Program. Through this program they will be able to provide career guidance and advice to the young people so they will be able to make informed and adequate career choices. The Project scope was enriched in FY 2013 by establishing a new component – *Inclusion of youth with disabilities in the YES Network activities* – with the grant that the Project won through a competitive process organized by USAID worldwide. Within this component all three core curricula (WRES, WBL and CP) have been adapted to be used in an inclusive environment with all youth groups. The unifying efforts towards overcoming the gap on the local labor markets are reflected in the Local Economic and Social Councils (LESCs) as bodies of the Municipalities where the private-public dialogue (PPD) is taking place. This is a tri-partite body that brings together the employers, the employees and the state representatives to discuss jointly relevant issues for the local community. YES is making efforts to secure participation of youth in the Councils so their perspective on the issue will be considered and will be able to make an influence on the initiatives that LESC will propose to the Municipality.

YES Network's objectives are:

- Objective 1: Facilitate Public-Private Dialogue that will improve local level demand-supply labor exchange at the local level.
- Objective 2: Strengthen the capacities of NGOs and DPOs for development of employability skills in youth.
- Objective 3: Strengthen the capacity of the Employment Services Agency to provide better services to registered unemployed youth, including youth with disabilities, such as training in work-readiness skills, access to structured work-based learning opportunities, and up-to-date information on job openings and career development opportunities.
- Objective 4: Provide continuing professional development opportunities for teachers in secondary schools.
- Objective 5: Create innovative mechanisms to make secondary schools and the VET Center more responsive and relevant.
- Objective 6: Integrate productive connections with current and planned USAID and other donor workforce related activities.

Following table represents a **summary of planned, accomplished and activities exceeding target** throughout the FY 2014 directed towards meeting the objectives:

Table 3. Summary of planned, accomplished and activities exceeding target under each objective⁹

AWP Planned Activities	Activities Accomplished	Activities Exceeding Target
Objective 1: Facilitate public-private dialogue that will improve demand-supply labor exchange at the local level		
Finalize the process of LESC establishment in municipalities of Bitola and Gostivar	<p>LESC Bitola and LESC Gostivar established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formal inauguration organized - constituent meetings held (Chairperson , deputy and secretary appointed and Book of rules adopted - meetings on a regular basis held (on a quarterly basis in both of the LESC) 	
Identify and select local partners and institutional hosts for establishment of LESC or alternative institutions for public-private dialogue in the City of Skopje	<p>LESC of the City of Skopje established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal inauguration organized - Agreement between the main social partners signed - Constituent meeting held (Chairperson , deputy and secretary appointed and Book of rules adopted) - Meetings on a regular basis held 	
Build capacity of LESC to develop their Strategic and Local Action Plans as basic documents concerned with the overall purpose and scope of work of the LESC	<p>Workshops on strategic planning organized for members of LESC Bitola, LESC Gostivar and LESC Skopje</p> <p>LESC Bitola, LESC Gostivar and LESC Skopje</p> <p>developed Strategic Planning Documents</p> <p>Capacity building workshops about the LESC's needs and challenges organized for members of LESC Strumica and LESC Stip</p> <p>Local Labor Market Analysis conducted in Municipality of Gostivar</p> <p>Local Labor Market Analysis conducted in Municipality of Stip</p> <p>Workshop for all LESC on sharing experiences and lessons learnt</p>	<p>LESC Bitola; LESC Gostivar; EC Prilep and LESC Skopje has developed Action plans for period of 3 years;</p> <p>LESC Strumica and LESC Stip has develop annual work plans for 2014</p>

⁹ This table is taken from the YES Network FY2014 Annual Report

	organized	
Support LESC in implementation of the priorities from their Strategic or Local Employment Plans	<p>Local Development Strategy for Bitola Municipality developed</p> <p>Workshops about development of Local Action Plan for Employment organized for members of LESC Bitola, Stip and Gostivar</p>	<p>YES PPD specialist facilitate and lead the working group responsible for the workforce development section of Local Development Strategy for Municipality of Prilep,</p> <p>Local Development Strategy for the Municipality of Prilep finalized (in collaboration with USAID SBE Project</p>
Organize town hall meetings/round tables/panels/conferences on local social dialogue with experts and representatives from municipalities and other relevant authorities (NESC, ZELS, MLSP, EOM, FTU, MLSG)	<p>The following panel discussions were organized by LESC and supported by YES Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Mismatch between supply and demand of the workforce in the Municipality of Tetovo” - “Opening green jobs in municipality of Stip – possibilities and challenges” - “Opening green jobs in municipality of Bitola – possibilities and challenges” - “Opening green jobs in municipality of Prilep – possibilities and challenges” 	Public event organized by LESC Tetovo: Promotion of the VET schools to primary school students
Support LESC to promote its visibility and role in the community	Articles published in local municipal newsletters and on the official municipal web portal (LESC Strumica, EC Prilep, LESC Stip and LESC Bitola)	
Included LESC in enlistment of business involved in WBL activities in conjunction with ESA’s ALMM	LESCs promoted WBL programs and workshops for mentors from Companies to business representatives	
Organize Craft Days in one economic-industrial region	<i>Postponed for 2015 since YES has already supported organization of Job Fairs in Prilep and Skopje</i>	
Ensure inclusion of at least one representative of DPOs in each LESC	<p>Five LESC included persons with disabilities from local DPO’s (LESC Skopje– 4 persons, LESC Stip– 1 person, LESC Strumica– 2 persons, LESC Bitola– 3 persons, LESC Gostivar 2 persons);</p> <p>LESC Tetovo has also a representative from local DPO, but he is not person with disability</p>	

	The Economic Council of Prilep does not include any persons with disabilities, because of the different structure (the members of Prilep EC are mainly from the business sector)	
Engage in dialogue with the municipalities to ensure LESC sustainability	<p>The following documents developed by LESC have been officially adopted by Municipality Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A document on strategic planning of the EC Prilep - A document on strategic planning of the LESC Bitola - A document on strategic planning of the LESC Gostivar - A document on strategic planning of the LESC Skopje - Local Action Plan for Employment (LAPE) for Municipality of Gostivar - Local Development Strategy for Municipality of Bitola <p>Public presentation of the findings from the Local Labor Market Analysis organized by LESC Gostivar</p>	
Objective 2: Strengthen the capacities of NGOs and DPOs in development of employability skills in youth		
Support youth serving DPOs and NGOs to organize work readiness training for unemployed, out-of-school and unregistered at ESA youth, including YWD	<p>Work Readiness Skills workshops for NGOs and DPOs organized in Skopje;</p> <p>One Skopje NGO and one DPO delivered inclusive WRS training for 44 unemployed youth (13 of them youth with disabilities)</p>	4 NGO-DPO partnerships established in Skopje, Bitola and Prilep (DPOs with virtually no training delivery experience were paired with seasoned youth-serving NGOs experienced in WRS implementation);
Provide physical accessibility and assistive technology to JCs, CCs and DPOs	<p>37 secondary schools and 7 job clubs equipped with assistive technology devices and software;</p> <p>Accessibility audit conducted in all 38 YES-supported schools and 7 job clubs;</p>	
Train DPOs/NGO facilitators in use of assistive technology solutions and WRS	<p>9 trainings for WRS implementation in inclusive groups delivered;</p> <p>18 NGO and 16 DPO facilitators from 7 partner municipalities trained in WRS implementation and use of assistive technology during training in inclusive groups;</p>	
Train NGO/DPO facilitators on use of	<i>Postponed for January 2015 (due to</i>	

adapted WRS for youth with intellectual disabilities	<i>internal staff issues of Hendimak)</i>	
OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen the capacity of the Employment Services Agency to provide better services to registered unemployed youth, including YWDs, such as training in work-readiness skills, access to structured work-based learning opportunities, and up-to-date information on job openings and career development opportunities		
Workshops for Skopje ESA Staff for using on- line platforms for creation of Career portfolio	On line career portfolio workshop delivered to ESA facilitators and registered unemployed youth.	
Train ESA staff from all partner municipalities in providing career counseling	Career Counseling Program adapted and specifically customized for ESA staff. ToT career counseling program delivered to ESA staff from 7 ESA centers.	
Assist ESA staff from all 7 (seven) partner municipalities to apply work readiness trainings to registered unemployed youth.	45 WRS workshops delivered to unemployed youth in 7 ESA centers	WRS trainings to ESA staff from additional 16 ESA centers delivered and 25 ESA facilitators trained.
Implement Work Based Learning (WBL) curriculum in compliance with ALMM	45 WBL workshops delivered to unemployed youth in 7 ESA centers	
Recognition ceremony for ESA centers for employment and facilitators	Recognition ceremony for ESA facilitators from 7 centers for employment organized and the best ESA facilitators and ESA centers awarded.	
Establish sustainable cooperation (planning process) between ESA, LESC and Career Centers in the schools.	Networking meetings between main YES partners on local level organized in Strumica, Prilep, Bitola, Tetovo and Stip	

Organize regional meetings between ESAs facilitators.	Facilitators met to exchange experience and share best practices	
Enhance Job Club materials, resources and services in YES Network partner municipalities.	<p>The Job Club in ESA Skopje renovated and equipped with IT equipment, furniture and career development materials</p> <p>Manual for Internship and Mentoring delivered to all ESA Job Clubs</p> <p>Facebook groups for informing youth about the WRS and WBL workshops at ESA centers opened.</p> <p>Video materials from WRS workshops at ESA job Clubs prepared</p>	
Organize job fair	The first Career Fair was organized in Prilep in partnership with ESA and in collaboration with EC Prilep, secondary schools, Economic Chambers and NGOs,	
Train ESA facilitators on awareness and inclusion of YwD in WRS and CCCP	<p>Assistive technology and disability awareness trainings delivered in 7 municipalities;</p> <p>ESA facilitators trained in use of assistive technology and disability awareness;</p> <p>ESA facilitators from 7 partner municipalities trained in WRS implementation in inclusive groups;</p>	ESA facilitators filled out a Disability Awareness Survey, findings summarized in a baseline report;
Train ESA facilitators on use of adapted WRS for youth with intellectual disabilities	<i>Postponed for 2015</i>	
Train ESA and DPO staff on implementation of upgraded WBL program to include considerations of the needs of YwDs	<i>Postponed for 2015</i>	
Provide support to ESA Centers and DPOs in placement and monitoring of YWD in WBL opportunities	<i>Will be implemented since the Inclusive WBL training is delivered to ESA staff</i>	
Objective 4: Provide continuing professional development opportunities for teachers in secondary schools		
Implementation of training and certification program for Career Counselors – first 2 Cohorts	Second part of the Career Counseling training delivered to teachers and student support service representatives from 6 municipalities (Tetovo, Bitola, Strumica, Stip, Gostivar and Prilep)	

	25 groups of students (app 25 students in each group) for free-classes were formed in the schools to follow the "Career Planning" program	
Implementation of training and certification program for Career Counselors from Skopje schools	First and second part of Career Counseling Trainings for teachers and student support service representatives from Skopje schools delivered	
Mentoring secondary school staff delivering YES Network services to provide feedback and guidance to ensure sustainable delivery of employability skills services to students	Three sets of mentoring sessions were delivered to secondary schools: - 1 set in all municipalities delivered in October - 2 set in all municipalities delivered in February-March - 3 set in all municipalities delivered in September	
Implement WBL training program for Skopje schools	Two WBL trainings delivered to VET teachers from Skopje schools	
WRS workshops for additional teachers from the second cohort of Municipalities	3 WRS workshops for teachers from Gostivar, Prilep and Stip delivered	e-career portfolio workshops were delivered in each of the 11 schools from Skopje
Mentoring in companies – workshops for companies' mentors	3 Workshops for companies' mentors were delivered to groups of companies' representatives in Tetovo, Bitola and Strumica	
Organize workshops for developing entrepreneurship skills in secondary school students in support of the Work Based Learning activities	Training for developing business plan was organized in cooperation with Bitola Business start-up center for teachers and students from Bitola schools.	Competition for best business plan was supported by YES among the students from Bitola schools who have successfully completed the training. Workshops for using HP Life platform have been delivered in Tetovo and Strumica in support of the implementation of WBL
Train teachers on awareness and inclusion of YWDs in WRS and CCCP	8 Assistive technology and disability trainings delivered and teachers from 7 municipalities trained in disability awareness and use of assistive technology in inclusive classroom settings; 107 secondary school teachers from 7 municipalities trained to implement the enhanced Work Readiness Skills curriculum in inclusive classrooms;	144 teachers, who attended the Disability Awareness and Assistive Technology training, filled out a disability awareness questionnaire, findings summarized in a baseline report;

Train teachers on use of adapted WRS for youth with intellectual disabilities	<i>Postponed for 2015</i>	
Implement special WRS training sessions for students with intellectual disabilities	<i>Postponed for 2015</i>	
Support implementation of upgraded WRS program that includes considerations of the needs of YWDs in the schools	<i>Postponed for 2015</i>	
Orientation meetings and internships for VET teachers (externships)	Three orientation meetings were held with 19 teachers from Bitola, Strumica and Tetovo	
Share teachers' best practices through a Community of practice	<i>Community of Practice approach has been abandoned due to HR and time constraints</i>	A catalogue of good practices in integrating WRS in school subjects was developed, and shared with all teachers trained in WRS
Work with USAID Teacher Career and Professional Development Project on teacher professional competencies specific for VET teachers	<p>Elements from the career counseling have been integrated in the teachers' catalogue of basic competencies.</p> <p>Externship has been added as a form of professional development for the VET teachers</p>	
Objective 5: Create innovative mechanisms to make Secondary Schools and VET Center more responsive and relevant		
WBL opportunities for VET students organized	<p>WBL curriculum implemented in VET schools from YES partner municipalities and students participated in different WBL activities</p> <p>The Mentors in Companies trainings have been used as opportunities for matching businesses and schools for provision of WBL experiences</p>	
In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) institutionalize certification program for Career Counselors	<p>Regular meetings held with MoES representatives for informing them of the progress with the program implementation</p> <p>A project activity for Career Planning was developed for the gymnasia. BDE approved the program for piloting in four gymnasia</p>	
Meeting with school directors,	Two meetings with school directors	

municipal representatives, and representatives from institutions responsible for education (MoES, BDE, VET Center) – presentation of progress of project and recommendations from experiences	<p>organized – one at the beginning of the school year (October 2013), and the other in June 2014.</p> <p>An additional meeting with only Skopje school directors was organized in October 2013</p>	
Meetings and events with relevant stakeholders of the VET system	<p>Regular meetings have been held with VET Center representatives for coordination about YES activities</p> <p>Regular meetings have been held with Chamber of Artisans regarding the Mentors in Companies program</p> <p>Two official openings of career centers organized and attended by high officials (one in Skopje and one in Prilep)</p>	<p>Standard for mentors in Companies developed and adopted by the VET Center and Chamber of Artisans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program for training Mentors in Companies developed • Standard for teachers externship (teacher training in companies) was developed • Program for orientation meeting for externship developed
Enhance Career Center materials, resources and services	<p>A brochure for parents for career counseling has been developed and distributed to Career centers in all YES partner schools</p> <p>Tips of the Week booklet has been purchased and distributed to career centers in all YES partner schools</p> <p>Skopje schools received literature for the career centers (in English) as well as the WRS Best Practices manual in the local languages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A manual for career counseling was developed in support of the implementation of the Career Planning program in VET schools • Additional module for working with parents was developed as a part of the CCCP training program • WBL program was translated into Turkish
Development of Action Plans for Career Centers for Skopje schools	Two workshops have been organized and held with Skopje schools for development of Career Centers action plans	
Organize career fair and career development competitions for secondary school students and unemployed youth	YES Network supported MASSUM (Macedonian Vocational Students Organization) in the organization of the Educational Rendezvous 2014 (career fair) which was held in Krushevo.	A competitions for official poster of the Educational Rendezvous 2014 and best on-line Career Portfolio was supported by YES
Upgrade secondary school Career Centers physical infrastructure and resources in additional 10 schools	<p>The career center in secondary school Koco Racin from Skopje was equipped</p> <p>The process for selection of additional schools to be equipped with career centers was completed – a public call was opened, and visits to the short-listed schools were made for on-spot</p>	

	assessment	
Finalize the adapted curricula for WRS, WBL and CCCP as well as the guide on inclusion of youth with disabilities	<p>Manuals on use of Windows accessibility options and NVDA screen reader developed and;</p> <p>WRS program enhanced with guidelines for inclusion of students with disabilities;</p> <p>WBL program enhanced with guidelines for inclusion and placement of students with disabilities in work based learning opportunities;</p>	
Objective 6: Integrate productive connections with current and planned USAID and other donor workforce related activities		
Cooperation and coordination with other projects working in workforce development	<p>YES YwD Inclusion Coordinator and M and E STS participate in USAID Persons with Disabilities Internship and Employment Project Advisory Board;</p> <p>Productive connection with USAID E-accessible Education project established and maintained;</p> <p>YES Network Physical Accessibility Checklist shared with all USAID projects.</p> <p>Collaboration with a Business Start-up Center from Bitola, the implementer of USAID Business without Borders project in organizing and delivering training for developing a business plan for teachers and students from Bitola schools</p> <p>In cooperation with the USAID Teacher Professional and Career Development Project (TPCD), basic competencies regarding career education have been included in the catalogue of competences for all teachers</p>	

MONITORING AND EVALUATION BACKGROUND

YES Network Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities seek to provide evidence about the project progress towards the project goal and objectives, according to a set of key indicators stated in the Performance Measurement Plan (PMP) (see Appendix 1). These activities are implemented through a **collaborative process** involving all YES Network Project staff and stakeholders. The process is **formative**,

identifying successes and challenges at all stages of the project implementation so the YES team will be able to take appropriate actions to improve project performance and provide timely and constructive feedback to partners. A **summative** evaluation will measure progress against baseline statements and allow for comparisons between different municipalities or different implementing approaches. The M&E process is **participatory**, engaging all stakeholders. YES created and is maintaining a comprehensive database containing project output data.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The annual evaluation was designed in order to provide relevant evidence for the status of the set objectives. Namely, the evaluation answers to the following key questions for the period of FY 2014:

- 1) Are the young people (secondary school students, unemployed registered at ESA and unemployed, out-of-school and unregistered at ESA) improving their employability skills after participating in YES Network programs (WRS, WBL and CP)?
- 2) Are the capacities of the YES Network partnering institutions strengthened (secondary schools, ESA Centers and NGOs/DPOs)?
- 3) Are the LESC's functioning bodies for public-private dialogue?

Field data gathering activities were performed in all six municipalities – Tetovo, Bitola, Strumica (involved in the first year of the project), Gostivar, Prilep and Shtip (involved in the second year of the project) and City of Skopje (involved in the third year of the project). Data was gathered in order to evaluate the effects of the WRS and WBL workshops towards the employability skills in secondary school students, youth registered as unemployed with the ESA and youth that are not in school and are not employed. The evaluation of the CP activities is attached to this report as a separate document that was prepared earlier in the year on a request of the MOES. Also, the functioning of the LESC's was assessed.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative survey methods was employed - quantitative data was acquired through questionnaires, interviews and observation check lists, while through focus groups and interviews were provided additional qualitative data which allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the effects.

The following methods were employed:

- Questionnaires administration to teachers, students, ESA and NGO youth
- Focus groups with teachers, students, ESA and NGO youth
- Interviews with ESA facilitators and LESC representatives
- Class and workshop observation
- School reports on WRS and WBL implementation
- ESA and NGO reports on internships and employments

The evaluation is performed using a convenience sample with intention to acquire as higher number of respondents as possible. This design was selected due to the fact that there are limitations for covering the population, such as lack of human resources to administer face-to-face surveys (providing best quality data) and overburdened schools at the evaluation period (end of school year). However, wherever it was possible the whole population was involved, such as LESC's and ESA Centers. Another data limitation refers to the fact that most of the data is obtained through self-reporting techniques.

The number of respondents and the methods used are presented in the table below:

[Table 3. Number of respondents/groups and methods](#)

	Questionnaires/WRN ! test	Focus groups (FGs)	Class/workshop observation	Interviews
Teachers	- 146 out of 311 trained in WRS (47%) - 52 out of 102 trained in WBL (51%)	- 7 FGs (WRS) - 6 FGs (WBL)	- 29 classes (WRS) - 9 classes (WBL)	
ESA facilitators			- 7 workshops	- 7 interviews
Students	- 889 out of 1740 trained in WRS (51%) - 351 out of 958 trained in WBL (37%)	- 10 FGs (WRS) - 8 FG (WBL)		
ESA youth	- 297 out of 737 trained in WRS (40%) - 33 tested with WRN! test	- 7 FGs		
NGO youth		- 2 FGs		
LESCs				7 interviews

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS UNDER EACH USAID STANDARD INDICATOR

STANDARD INDICATOR 4.6.3-2: NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVING NEW EMPLOYMENT OR BETTER EMPLOYMENT (INCLUDING BETTER SELF-EMPLOYMENT) AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATION IN USG-FUNDED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

KEY FINDINGS

One third (390) of the young persons that participated in the Work readiness skills (WRS) program through Employment Centres, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or Disabled people's organization (DPOs) received new employment. Three of them are youth with disabilities.

Through the efforts of the ESA Centres from the seven partner municipalities, one NGO and one DPO from Skopje and the 16 additional ESA Centres from all over Macedonia, a total of 1262 young unemployed people, including youth with disabilities, participated in WRS workshops. Following these workshops 390 young people or 31% from the total number got employed.

High percent of employed registrants was reported by the ESA Centres in the seven partner municipalities. From the 737 participants in their workshops, 328 (45%) got employment.

The NGO and DPO from Skopje conducted three inclusive workshops encompassing 44 young people (13 of whom youth with disabilities), and following the workshops eight (18%) of them were employed, three being youth with disabilities.

The additional 16 ESA Centres managed to conduct 30 workshops encompassing 481 young people in the short period between June and September 2014. Fifty four (11%) of these young people were employed following the workshops.

Table 4. Number/percentage of youth gaining employment after participating in a WRS workshop in ESA Center or an NGO/DPO

Workshop implementer	Total # participants	Employments	% of employed youth
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ESA	737	328	45%
ESA (16 additional ESA Centers)	481	54	11%
NGO/DPO	44	8 (3 YWD)	18%
Total	1262	390	31%

The table below shows the employments of youth trained through ESA Centers disaggregated by municipality. Highest numbers of employments through an ESA Center are registered in Stip (89) and Bitola (84). The Employment Center from Prilep reported the lowest number of employments (6). All of the NGO/DPO participants who got employment after the workshop (8) are from Skopje.

Table 5. Number of youth gaining employment after participating in a WRS workshop in ESA Center or an NGO – disaggregated by municipality

	Employments	
	ESA	NGO
Bitola	84	-
Tetovo	51	-
Strumica	20	-
Prilep	6	-
Gostivar	48	-
Shtip	89	-
Skopje	30	8

From the 16 additional ESA Centers, most employments following the workshops are registered in Radovis (14) and Ohrid (8). The table below shows the 54 employments from the 16 additional ESA Centers disaggregated by municipality.

Table 6. Number of youth gaining employment after participating in a WRS workshop in the 16 additional ESA Centers

ESA Center	Number of Participants	Number of Employments	ESA Center	Number of Participants	Number of Employments
1. Berovo	16	4	9. Kumanovo	95	6
2. Veles	8	2	10. Makedonski Brod	34	5
3. Delcevo	7	0	11. Negotino	13	2
4. Kavadarci	15	2	12. Ohrid	50	8
5. Kicevo	73	4	13. Probistip	12	2
6. Kocani	8	0	14. Radovis	59	14
7. Kriva Palanka	13	0	15. Resen	13	1
8. Krusevo	27	1	16. Struga	38	3

STANDARD INDICATOR 4.6.3-9: PERSON HOURS OF TRAINING COMPLETED IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTED BY USG ASSISTANCE

KEY FINDINGS

*During FY 2014 a total of **207,357 person hours** was invested in training of various participant groups in many different workshops supported and/or conducted by the YES Network Project.*

The table below refers to the person hours of training completed in workforce development supported by USG assistance. For each of the different types of workshops the participant groups are defined, as well as the number of participants attending the workshop and the duration of the workshop expressed in hours (60 min). This adds up to the total number of hours spent in workforce development supported by USG assistance.

Table 5. Person hours of training

	Workshop participants	N	Hours of training	N*Hours of training
WRS	NGO Staff Skopje	25	33	825
	ESA youth – 7	718	19	13642
	ESA youth – 16 additional	481	18	8550
	NGO youth	35	24	840
	Students	1740	54	93960
	WRS Adapted - Teachers	109	10	1090
	WRS Adapted - ESA staff	11	10	110
	WRS Adapted - NGO staff	7	10	70
	Teachers (2nd cohort additional)	63	18	1134
	ESA Staff 16 additional	21	34	714
ATYI	Teachers	142	10	1420
	ESA staff	11	10	110
WBL	Teachers	41	15	615
	Student	958	49,5	47421
	ESA youth	718	4	2872
Mentors in companies	Trainers	42	16	672
CCCP	Teachers	96	25	2400
	ESA staff	18	25	450
	Students VET	531	54	28674
	Students Gymnasium	34	27	918
SP LESC	LESC reps.	28	10	280
LESC Capacity building	LESC reps.	59	10	590
All		5,407		207,357

STANDARD INDICATOR 4.6.3-10: NUMBER OF DAYS OF USG FUNDED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO COUNTERPARTS OR STAKEHOLDERS

KEY FINDINGS

*A total of **398 consultancy days** were expended for the needs of each component within the YES Network Project, distributed among 54 consultants*

The different types of consultancy include: development of strategies, instruments and action plans, capacity building, workshop/class observation and conducting various types of trainings and workshops. The table

categorizing the types of consultancy and presenting the number of consultants and the number of consultants' days in FY 2014 can be found in Appendix ???.

CUSTOM INDICATOR: PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH SHOWING DESIRED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

KEY FINDINGS

Majority of unemployed youth trained by ESA Centres that participated in the WRN! Testing (94%) showed desired level of employability skills.

*In addition, a self-reporting survey results show that both youth groups, secondary school students and unemployed youth trained by ESA Centers, in the two groups of municipalities and City of Skopje show improvement in their employability skills after participating in the workshops for WRS and WBL programs. **The overall percentage of youth who advanced their employability skills is 80%: 81% among the students and 76% among the unemployed youth registered at ESA.***

Work Ready Now! (WRN!) testing

During this year, 33 unemployed youth from three ESA Centers - Bitola, Strumica and Skopje, took the WRN! test as part of the international pilot testing of the newly developed instrument by EDC. Most of them, 31 (94%), successfully passed the test and received a certificate that is internationally recognized.

Table 10. Number/percentage of unemployed youth who took the WRN! test and successfully passed it

	Number of candidates for the exam			Number of successfully passed		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
ESA Bitola	4	11	15	4	11	15
ESA Strumica	5	6	11	5	4	9
ESA Skopje	1	6	7	1	6	7
Total	10	23	33	10	21	31 (94%)

Work readiness skills (WRS) self-reporting survey

The advancement of the employability skills of youth was assessed by using sets of questions for each module of the WRS curriculum. All answers are based on self-assessment and for six of the eight modules (Personal development; Appropriate workplace behavior; Communication skills; Teamwork and leadership; Job seeking skills; Financial skills-knowledge and attitudes) the respondents were asked to provide a measure that represents their behavior, knowledge or skills before and after the workshop. The items were designed in a way that a higher score represents higher level of presence of the skill or knowledge in question. The difference between the "before the workshop score" and the "after the workshop score" is taken as a measure for improvement of the employability skills.

Table 7. Improvement of youth's employability skills after the WRS workshop

	Personal development	Appropriate workplace behavior	Communication skills	Teamwork and leadership	Job seeking skills	Financial skills – knowledge and attitudes	Average improvement
Students showing improvement	86% (761 out of 886)	71% (626 out of 886)	80% (709 out of 885)	86% (764 out of 885)	84% (741 out of 880)	78% (683 out of 880)	81%
Unemployed youth showing improvement	83% (242 out of 293)	53% (155 out of 293)	80% (230 out of 289)	85% (245 out of 289)	87% (255 out of 292)	70% (205 out of 291)	76%
All Youth showing improvement	85% (1003 out of 1179)	66% (781 out of 1179)	80% (939 out of 1174)	86% (1009 out of 1174)	85% (996 out of 1172)	76% (888 out of 1171)	80%

Results disaggregated by municipalities are to be found in the Appendix

Work-based learning (WBL) self-reporting survey

The WBL program was implemented in schools from the first and second group of municipalities. Based on the responses in the questionnaires, the majority showed improvement in their preparation for a work-based learning. For each of the statements below the respondents were asked to provide a measure that represents their behavior, knowledge or skills before and after the workshop. The questionnaire items were designed in a way that a higher score represents higher presence of the skill or knowledge in question. The difference between the “before the workshop score” and the “after the workshop score” is taken as a measure for improvement of the skills. In average 90% of the students showed improvement in these skills. The table below shows the improvement on a group level for each of the skills.

Table 8. Improvement of students' skills and knowledge for work-based learning after participating in the WBL program

	Improved (N)	Total (N)	Percentage
I can identify my own skills	262	347	76%
I can identify my own abilities	222	344	65%
I know how to present my skills and abilities to the employer	237	344	69%
I can identify my professional values	225	344	65%
I know how to prepare an application for an employer	243	334	73%
I know what to do in an informative meeting with an employer	237	338	70%
I know my professional values	194	340	57%
I know what resources are necessary for work-based learning	217	346	63%

I know well the following types of work-based learning practices:			
• Company visit and company tour	219	334	66%
• Workplace observation	217	331	66%
• Practical instruction/work experience	216	338	64%
• Summer practice	197	337	58%
• Student entrepreneurship	211	328	64%
I know well the procedures for monitoring, evaluation and keeping track of work-based learning	234	341	69%

Also, 73% of the youth that participated in the WBL program through the ESA Centers have improved their skills and knowledge for internship, as the only form of work-based learning introduced in this training.

Table 9. Improvement of youth' skills and knowledge for work-based learning after participating in the WBL program in the ESA Centers

	Improved (N)	Total - N	Percent
1st Cohort	53	67	79%
2nd Cohort	51	83	61%
City of Skopje	11	14	79%

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS UNDER EACH INTERMEDIATE RESULT

IR1: DEMAND-SUPPLY LABOR EXCHANGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IMPROVED THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE

INDICATOR 1.1: NUMBER OF LOCAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCILS (LESC) FUNCTIONING.

KEY FINDINGS

During FY 2014 the last of the seven targeted LESC was established in the City of Skopje. A Local economic council (LEC) was established in Prilep in 2011, before the Project partnered with this municipality. LEC in Prilep focuses on the economic matters and at present they are not planning on extending their scope of operation in the social sphere. YES Network supports this body with the same scope of activities as the LESC.

The findings for this indicator are based on the data acquired through structured individual interviews with representatives from each LESC and LEC Prilep and from project documents. During this year the remaining three LESC – in Gostivar, Bitola and Skopje - completed the Strategic planning workshop. Also, during this year all LESC have finalized the basic documents:

- Gostivar and Skopje LESC finalized the Book of rules and procedures;
- Bitola, Prilep and Skopje finalized the Strategic plan;
- Stip, Bitola, Prilep, Tetovo, Gostivar and Skopje finalized the Action plan;

LESC from Tetovo and Gostivar prepared the Local action plan for employment (LAPE).

Four LESC held public events during this year:

LESC Bitola organized a panel, open to the public, on *Potential of the Green Jobs*, which was attended by more than 50 participants, among which were the members of LESC and representatives from the local self-governance, representatives of the local businesses, mostly from the energy sector, representatives from educational institutions, Employment Service Agency and from non-governmental organizations.

An outcome of the panel was a suggestion by the representative from the Employment Center LESC Bitola to submit a proposal to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy to include the green jobs in the Active Labor Market Measures and other ESA employment programs.

LESC Tetovo organized a public event *Mismatch between the supply and demand in the labor market in the Municipality of Tetovo – possibilities and challenges*. The event was attended by about 30 representatives of different institutions and relevant local stakeholders that are directly or indirectly involved in the process of labor supply and demand in the municipality of Tetovo. The Labor market analysis for the Tetovo region was presented and followed by a discussion on the labor market trends and the needs of the local companies for skilled and competitive workforce.

LESC Shtip organized a panel discussion *Opening Green Jobs in Municipality of Stip*. Besides the LESC members, the panel attended representatives from the local business sector and other relevant stakeholders. Here are some of the conclusions from the panel: Municipality of Stip has plenty of potential of renewable energy resources (solar, wind and biomass); education programs need to be responsive to the

demand for green jobs; there is a need of awareness raising for potential of renewable energy resources and their usage on household level.

LEC Prilep also organized a public event on the topic of *Green jobs – challenges and opportunities*. The mayor of Prilep supported this event and addressed the audience. He accentuated the meaning of the opening of green jobs and informed them about the efforts of the Municipality and the Economic Council for creating a welcoming environment for implementation of successful projects in this field.

The LESC's still do not have established regular practice of submitting properly elaborated written initiatives to the Municipal Councils. So far, LESC's members are communicating directly with the Mayors and other municipal officials, mainly discussing project ideas related to some quick-fix economic and social issues. Those ideas which were considered as relevant became part of the municipal plans or strategic documents as concrete projects developed by the municipal administration. Several LESC's already have worked together on drafting the strategic documents and action plans in order to complement their joint efforts. Such documents were submitted and adopted by the Councils in the meantime. Also, there are couple of cases (Bitola and Prilep) where the mayors participated on some of the LESC's sessions, strongly recognizing and supporting their role and activities.

However, during this reporting period, the LESC Tetovo informed their members that three recommendations given to the Municipal Council during the last year, were adopted by the Municipality and will be implemented through the Municipal Department on Local Economic Development. The three recommendations include: 1) Increasing the participation of the young people for 25% in the use of Active labor market measures of the ESA Center; 2) Annual forum/conference on entrepreneurship and SME in the Tetovo region; 3) Program for support of innovative ideas of young talents.

Table 11. LESS status by the end of FY2014

	Strumica	Shtip	Tetovo	Gostivar	Bitola	Prilep	Skopje
Date of establishment	22.12.2011	8.02.2013	23.08.2012	30.09.2013	30.05.2013	12.2011^[1]	18.12.2013
Strategic Planning workshop	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Book of rules and procedures	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategic Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Action Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local action plan for employment (LAPE)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Written recommendations to the municipality during FY2014	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Town hall meetings	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

Almost common issue of the LESC's is that the President and the members coming from municipal administration are more active compared to the others, who are less motivated to participate (mainly due to the volunteer type of their involvement, although neither President nor any other LESC member is paid).

^[1] Established on the initiative of the Mayor of the Municipality of Prilep before its partnership with YES Network

Accordingly, the initiatives and proposals come (mostly) by the President or the Secretary who is usually a member appointed at LSCs by the respective municipality.

IR2: CAPACITIES OF NGOS AND DPOs FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN YOUTH (INCLUDING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES) STRENGTHENED

INDICATOR 2.1: LOCAL YOUTH NGOS AND DPOS PROVIDE CAREER RELATED SERVICES TO NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED, UNREGISTERED AND OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

KEY FINDINGS

Forty four (44) unemployed, unregistered at ESA and out-of-school young people participated in a Work readiness skills workshop organized by NGO/DPO. Thirteen (13) of them were youth with disabilities.

In FY 2014, for the first time, three inclusive WRS workshops were implemented by one NGO – Youth Can (one workshop) and one DPO - Association of students and youth with disabilities – ASYD (two workshops), both from Skopje. These workshops were organized after 18 NGO and 16 DPO facilitators from different organizations from the 7 partner municipalities completed the tailor-made training for use of the adapted WRS program in inclusive groups. They implemented the adapted WRS program with unemployed, unregistered at ESA and out-of-school youth, including youth with disabilities. Following the workshops eight (18%) of them were employed, three being youth with disabilities (as already reported under the first standard indicator).

Table 5. Number of unemployed youth, including youth with disabilities, participating in a WRS workshop provided by NGO/DPO

Workshop implementer	Total # of participants	Female	Male
ASYD	24 (10 YWD)	16 (7 YWD)	8 (3 YWD)
Youth Can	20 (3 YWD)	12 (1 YWD)	8 (2 YWD)
Total	44 (13 YWD)	28 (8 YWD)	16 (5 YWD)

A total of nine persons, out of whom three with physical disability and one with combined physical and mild intellectual disability, participated in the **focus groups** discussions. They reported on their experience in the WRS workshops:

1) Implementation of the inclusive WRS program

The main motivation of the young people to participate in the workshop was their curiosity, the possibility to make new friendships and contacts and the possibility to learn new things. Their expectations were met in terms of the socialization and familiarisation with different professional

profiles. They also report on learning new things related to the workplace and interaction with other people: leadership, teamwork skills, communication, time management; how to look for a job, how to behave in the workplace, and what are the characteristics of a good and a bad interview. The participants commended the approach of the facilitators and described it as relaxed and the atmosphere as pleasant. They also reported that there was a good balance between the lecturing and discussing.

Regarding the aspect of inclusion the information was not very elaborate. The youth with disabilities underlined that they personally felt accepted and integrated into the group.

2) Benefits from the program

The participants said that the training helped them to systematize the knowledge they already had regarding employment, to fill in the gaps and to contextualize it. The participants from the group that had more persons with disabilities especially emphasized the Safety and protection in the workplace and the Law on Labour Relations as important and useful for them.

Several participants said that this training motivated them to change something in the way they look for a job – one of them became more proactive (she updated her CV, went to about ten interviews and applied to all relevant calls); another participant redefined his career goals; the third one altered her motivation letter and as a result she was accepted for an internship position.

For some of the youth with disabilities, this training helped them on a more global personal level, in terms of strengthening their personal capacities and self-confidence in the communication as a precondition for finding a job.

3) Challenges

The participants did not mention any specific challenge, except that some of the activities need to be revised to be more dynamic, such as behaviour at the workplace, law on labour relations, safety at the workplace and finances.

However, the participants gave recommendations regarding one general challenge when it comes to recruitment of participants for training, even more for participating in an inclusive group. They suggest that the best way to promote the program among the youth is through the social networks and web pages, although the personal contact and sharing of personal impressions is also very efficient. The best ways of informing the persons with disabilities about the training is through the associations working with persons with disabilities, and by informing the responsible institutions. In addition to this, the young people with disabilities need encouragement to get involved, in order to have a chance to see what their benefit might be.

IR3: CAPACITIES OF ESA CENTERS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN YOUTH (INCLUDING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES) STRENGTHENED

INDICATOR 3.1: NUMBER OF JOB CLUBS (JC) FUNCTIONING

KEY FINDINGS

*It is found that **all seven Job clubs are functioning** and most of them are used very extensively, not only for the YES Network activities, but also for other ESA programs and activities, such as the implementation of the Active labor market measures. During this year all Job Clubs were upgraded with a set of assistive technology and facilitators from each ESA Center were trained in its use as well as in inclusive WRS program and Career planning. However, Job Clubs have not allocated budget for implementation of the WRS workshops and will need support to provide the necessary materials for implementation of the activities.*

During FY2014 the capacities of ESA Job Clubs were strengthened by offering the ESA facilitators who work in the Job Clubs new knowledge and skills. Based on the **database reports** 27 ESA facilitators from 16 new ESA Centers were trained in the WRS program; 21 in Career planning program; 14 in adapted WRS program for inclusion of youth with disabilities and 21 in the use of assistive technology.

Table 15. Number of trained ESA facilitators

	Female	Male	Total
WRS	18	9	27
CP	12	9	21
WRS – adapted	11	3	14
Assistive technology	6	5	11

This year all ESA Centers received a set of assistive technology to be used in groups where youth with disabilities are included. Also, facilitators from each Center were trained on the use of the technology. Nevertheless, until the end of this fiscal year, the assistive technology has not been reported to be used, most probably because they had only participant with physical disability who does not use/need assistive technology.

More information on the functioning of the Job Clubs was gained through the **interviews** with facilitators from the seven ESA Centers. Here are the findings:

Job club in ESA Center - Strumica is used for the implementation of the WRS workshops, but is also available for use by the secondary schools and local NGOs. At the moment of the interview, a workshop organized by UNDP was going on.

They need support for providing materials for the implementation of the workshops: internet connection, printed materials for the participants and refreshments, because the Center does not have a budget for these workshops.

They have included persons with disabilities in some of the workshop, but the facilitator said that besides the efforts to adapt the approach in order to secure their active inclusion, it was very difficult to implement it. It takes a lot of time and effort to establish the conditions for meaningful inclusion and active participation of the youth with disabilities.

Job club in ESA Center – Bitola is a place where besides the WRS workshops, other trainings and testing are being implemented as well. They use all resources of the Job club (TV, computer, etc.) provided by the YES Network. Some unemployed youth were interested in using the books and magazines also provided by YES Network, for additional information. They need support for providing materials needed for the implementation of the program.

They did not have youth with disabilities included in the WRS workshops so far. However, they plan to include them in the future, starting by a meeting with them in order to become more familiar with their needs and to make suitable adaptations of the workshop and the environment.

Job club in ESA Center – Gostivar besides the WRS workshops is used for other trainings and activities of the ESA Center, such as presentation of the ALMM. The facilitators say that the Job club needs to be equipped with more computers and internet connection in order to attract more young people to use it.

In one of the workshops there were two girls with disabilities – one with speech and the other with hearing impairment. The facilitator said that it was a positive experience for all of them.

Job club in ESA Center – Skopje is used only for the WRS workshops, because they have another club where they implement the other activities. They did not request any support. During this year they did not have any inclusive group.

Job club in ESA Center – Stip is used by all employees in the Center for implementing their duties: workshops with unemployed persons, ALMM, job mediation etc. They are in need of workshop materials: paper, toner, markers, flipchart paper, refreshment for the participants.

So far, they had two girls with disabilities. They were successfully included and were very well accepted by the other participants.

Job club in ESA Center – Tetovo is used to its fullest by the users of the ALMM. They need more computers (5-6) and internet connection in the Job club. They would also need support for materials needed for the implementation of the workshops (manuals, name tags, notebooks and pencils).

They did not have persons with disabilities and do not feel enough prepared for implementation of inclusive workshops.

Job club in ESA Center – Prilep is not used to its fullest capacity, mainly because they lack facilitators who are prepared and willing to implement workshops with unemployed youth. They feel stressed out with this duty and do it only because it is their obligation.

At the observed workshop there was one person with physical disability and learning difficulties. He was completely integrated and did not ask for any special attention.

The youth participating in the WRS workshops organized in seven ESA Centers (Bitola, Prilep, Strumica, Stip, Tetovo, Gostivar and Skopje) reported in the **focus group discussions** that they have used the IT equipment in the Job clubs for various activities during the workshops. For example, they used the flip camera, TV, computer and internet for preparing presentations and for recording parts of the training. However, the books and CDs were used very little. Only in one ESA Center the equipment was not used.

INDICATOR 3.2: NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN CAREER RELATED WORKSHOPS DELIVERED BY ESA STAFF

KEY FINDINGS

During FY 2014 a total of **1218 young unemployed and registered at ESA persons participated in the WRS and WBL programs**, distributed in 73 workshops in 23 ESA Centers. Of them, 737 were trained through the seven Centers in the partner municipalities (during 43 workshops) and 481 through the additional ESA Centers (30 workshops).

During this year a number of workshops were held in each of the ESA Centers. The tables below show the number of workshops and participating youth. The total number of workshops held in the seven partnering municipalities is 43 and 737 young unemployed persons participated.

Table 16. Number of workshops and youth encompassed by ESA Centers from the 7 partner municipalities

ESA Center	Number of workshops in FY	Number of trained youth		
		Total	Male	Female
Bitola	6	106	31	75
Tetovo	6	119	59	60
Strumica	5	54	24	30
Prilep	5	110	32	78
Gostivar	6	90	34	56
Stip	7	145	62	83
Skopje	8	113	36	77
Total	43	737	278	459

In these workshops, ESA facilitators invited different employers as guests in order to make closer to the youth the business realm and what are they looking in their future employees. A list of 27 companies whose representatives were guests at the workshops is included in the Appendix ???. Highest number of companies were invited for the workshops in ESA Center Skopje (7), Shtip (6) and Bitola (5). ESA Center Prilep had only one guest company.

In the 16 additional ESA Centers another 30 workshops were implemented, encompassing 481 young unemployed persons.

Table 17. Number of workshops and youth encompassed by ESA Centers from the 16 additional municipalities

ESA Center	Number of workshops in FY14	Number of trained youth		
		Total	Male	Female
Berovo	1	16	8	8
Veles	1	8	2	6
Delcevo	1	7	3	4
Kavadarci	1	15	4	11
Kicevo	4	73	31	42
Kocani	1	8	5	3
Kriva Palanka	1	13	4	9
Krusevo	2	27	12	15
Kumanovo	5	95	38	57
Makedonski Brod	2	34	11	23
Negotino	1	13	1	12

Ohrid	3	50	14	36
Probistip	1	12	3	9
Radovis	3	59	36	23
Resen	2	13	6	7
Struga	1	38	0	38
Total	30	481	178	303

Unemployed youth and registered at ESA participated in WRS and WBL workshops at the local ESA Centers in seven municipalities. In **focus groups discussion** they report on their experience at the workshops:

1) Implementation of the WRS and WBL programs

Most of the participants at the focus group discussions mainly consider that the program was useful and interesting. Even though it was not all new to them, they had a chance to revise and systematize what they already knew, such as the content from the following modules: Communication skills, Personal development, Teamwork, Leadership and Job searching skills. The least known for most of the participants was the career portfolio.

During the workshops the participants learned mostly from the facilitators, but also from each other during the interactive sessions - through the exercises, the simulations, as well as the discussions among them, as the most useful elements of the curriculum.

The participants expressed themselves most positively regarding the approach of the trainers and the manner of conducting the trainings. Namely, they are satisfied with the relaxed, and yet working atmosphere, in which the agenda was respected, different opinions were taken into account, and the facilitators motivated interaction and participation of every involved participant in the training. They assess that during the trainings there was a good balance between the theoretical and the practical part.

2) Benefit from the programs

The young unemployed persons, participants at the ESA workshops, report that the training helped them acquire greater self-confidence and self-criticism when looking for a job; improve group and teamwork; improve their financial skills.

Several examples show that the training had positive impact on participants' behavior related to taking initiative for employment: one participant performed better in an interview as a result of the new learning and awareness (he had a more self-confident performance and appropriate body posture, asking questions which pointed to his interest in the job); another participant was motivated to think about self-employment; two participants remodeled their CVs in a new, more inventive way; and four participants applied for interns, out of whom three were accepted. Also, some participants informed that now they are more persistent in the job searching process: they apply more often and even visit companies in order to look for a job. They learned that "work should be searched for, and not waited for."

3) Challenges

Some participants express skepticism regarding how much what they have learned in the training will actually have application in this country, i.e. that it should be adjusted to the reality in Macedonia. They said that the employers also need to be better informed about the procedures, laws, rights and principles of employment in order this training to be appropriate for the 'real-world'.

Participants from the second set of municipalities consider that they lacked more contact with employers and/or companies in which they could actually try out the skills learned from this

curriculum in the job which the candidates would fill. They consider that it would have been useful to conduct a real interview with a real employer.

One-day **observation** of one workshop at each ESA Center was performed by a skillful and experienced consultant in the field of WRS, all of them being WRS facilitators from the NGO sector.

The **observation findings** confirm that the workshops were held in an interactive environment, where the participants were actively engaged in discussions. They were advancing their employability skills by using real-life examples in the learning process. However, there are aspects of the implementation that need to be improved, such as: making link between the sessions, reflecting on the new learning and using the self-evaluation instruments. Most probably these are the parts of the workshops that the facilitators decided to minimize in order to leave more time for the other content, because often they report on not having enough time for implementation of all activities.

The observation results show that the three strongest aspects of the workshops implemented by ESA facilitators are:

- The interactive approach of the facilitator;
- Asking questions that prompt a constructive discussion
- The use of real-life examples

The three weakest aspects are:

- Linking the session with the previous one;
- Reflection of the learning at the end of the session;
- The use of self-evaluation instruments.

Table 18. Observation assessment of workshops for WRS and WBL curriculum at ESA Job Clubs

Observation aspects:	Average score ¹⁰
1. The facilitator practices an interactive approach	4,43
2. The facilitator asks questions that prompt a constructive discussion	4,14
3. All participants are encouraged to participate	4,00
4. An atmosphere of collaboration and peer learning is encouraged	4,00
5. The facilitator states the skills and knowledge which the participants should obtain at the end of the session (expected outcomes)	3,71
6. At the beginning of the session link to the previous session is made	3,14
7. At the end of the session, the main issues are recapped, hence, the participants repeat what they have learned, and the facilitator checks their level of understanding	3,43
8. Real-life examples are being used	4,29
9. The participants get all necessary working materials	4,00
10. The participants use the self-evaluation instruments at the beginning and the end of the module	3,57

¹⁰ Average score out of five (1 represents the lowest, and 5 the highest score for the aspect observed)

IR4: RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND VET CENTER INCREASED, INCLUDING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

INDICATOR 4.1: NUMBER OF CAREER CENTERS (CC) FUNCTIONING

KEY FINDINGS

During this year there were no new Career centers established. However, the students and teachers reported on having various activities in the 38 existing Career Centers.

This year all Career Centers received a set of assistive technology to be used in groups where students with disabilities are included. Also, teachers from each school were trained on the use of the technology. Nevertheless, until the end of this fiscal year, none of the teachers created an inclusive group, therefore, the assistive technology has not been used.

In the **focus group** discussions (Appendix. ??) the teachers report that the Career centers are used to their fullest potential, both for implementation of the programs (WRS, WBL, CP) and for other school-related activities. Most keen on its use are the teachers from the second group of municipalities (Prilep, Shtip and Gostivar), reporting that *all* teachers that implement some of the programs use the Career center. *Most* of the teachers from Skopje (last involved in the project) report on using the Career center, while *half* of the teachers from the first group of municipalities (Bitola, Strumica and Tetovo) who implement some of the programs report on using it.

Career centers are used mostly for implementation of the free classes for the WRS, WBL and CP programs. The Career centers have been used for other activities related to curricular and extra-curricular activities: various presentations (ex. university programs, ESA programs), preparations for competitions, workshops from other projects, meetings of students, teachers, parents and official guests.

They use all the equipment in the centers, but rarely use the books and CDs because they are in English. However, teachers especially appreciate the manual on best practices that are very useful for upgrading of their teaching practices.

INDICATOR 4.2: PERCENTAGE OF TRAINED SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IMPLEMENTING CAREER RELATED ACTIVITIES BOTH THROUGH THE FREE CLASSES AND INTEGRATED IN THE EXISTING SUBJECTS

KEY FINDINGS

*It is found that half of the trained teachers implement the **Work readiness skills curriculum (49%)** and **Work-based learning curriculum (50%)** through the free classes and/or integrated in the existing subjects.*

The findings for this indicator are based on the data acquired from several sources: school reports, focus groups and class observation. The data refers to the implementation of the WRS and WBL programs. There is a separate report on the evaluation of the piloting of the Career planning program, which is available on request; the executive summary of this report can be found in the Appendix ???.

Findings related to the WRS program:

Through the school reports it can be found out that 49% of the total number of trained teachers during FYs 2011, 2012 and 2013 are implementing the WRS programs in some way: 7% implement it through the free classes, 31% through integration in the existing subjects and 11% use both approaches. The highest percentage of teachers implementing the program (78%) is found among the teachers from Skopje who are implementing the program for the first time this year. The lowest percentage of teachers implementing the program (35%) refers to the teachers who started the implementation of the program three years ago.

Table 19. Percentage of teachers' approach implementing the WRS curriculum

	Total number of trained teachers	Number of teachers implementing WRS	Difference	Teachers (free classes)	Teachers (integration)	Teachers (both approaches)
% from the total number of trained teachers (311) from all seven municipalities trained during FY11, FY12 and FY13	311	151	160	22	95	34
	100%	48,55%	51,45%	7,07%	30,55%	10,93%
% from the total number of trained teachers (178) from the first group of municipalities trained during FY11 and FY12	178	63	115	6	42	15
	100%	35,39%	64,61%	3,37%	23,60%	8,43%
% from the total number of trained teachers (79) from the second group of municipalities trained during FY12	79	46	33	7	27	12
	100%	58,23%	41,77%	8,86%	34,18%	15,19%
% from the total number of trained teachers (54) from Skopje in FY13	54	42	12	9	26	7
	100%	77,78%	22,22%	16,67%	48,15%	12,96%

During the **focus groups** discussions the teachers reported on the implementation of the WRS program with students, both integrated and during free classes. The findings are shared among the teachers from all municipalities.

1) Promotion of the program among the students

Teachers use different approaches to present and promote the WRS Program to the third year students to participate in the free classes, such as sharing verbal information to whole classes of students or delivering visual presentations (PPT, videos, web pages, posters and flyers) to students, parents and business representatives. In some schools they use social networks, such as Facebook groups and surveys. However, the most efficient way of promoting the program is the spread of information among the students from the students that participated in the program during the previous year.

In some schools the students apply for the program and in others teachers select one class to participate in the program. Teachers from schools in Skopje report that the students are involved in many different projects, thus having difficulty to find time for participation.

2) Implementation of the program

Teachers consider the approach in WRS as very appropriate for the implementation of the program. Because it is interactive, it engages the students and creates an atmosphere of collaboration and active participation. Most of the teachers think that the approach should not be changed because it is easily implemented on their side and highly accepted by the students. Teachers report that the students find this program very interesting, dynamic, fun, with the students in the center of the learning process. The program is implemented in a more relaxed atmosphere and the students are not assessed for it.

3) Benefit from the program

All teachers speak very highly about the benefit of the programs, saying that skills and knowledge within the WRS program are relevant and applicable for the actual labor market; the program helps the students to get to know oneself better; initiate proactive attitude towards employment; the skills acquired are transferable and observable in other situations in the school; students' attitudes and behavior change in a positive direction (more responsible, better organized, are more proactive, more independent; arrive on time)

4) Challenges related to the implementation of the program

The most shared challenge that the teachers and students face regarding the organization of the free classes is the attendance of the students, because these classes are scheduled after the regular classes, when many students who live in more remote villages need to use the transportation. The other reason for this is the long daily schedule of classes, after which the students are tired and with reduced attention. Teachers recommend including these classes in the regular class schedule, so there will be an allocated time slot for their implementation.

Another challenge for some of the teachers is the small space in most of the career centers – they are enough large for 10-15 students, but most of them are not enough large for a group of 25 students.

Findings related to the WBL program:

The school reports data informs that 50% of the total number of trained teachers during FYs 2012 and 2013 are implementing the WBL program. Most of them (27%) integrate its activities in the subject Practical instruction; 19% implement it through the free classes and 4% use both approaches. There is similar percentage of teachers from both sets of municipalities that implement this program.

Table 20. Percentage of teachers' approach implementing the WBL curriculum

	Total number of trained teachers	Number of teachers implementing WBL	Difference	Teachers (free classes)	Teachers (integration)	Teachers (both approaches)
% from the total number of trained teachers (102) from the first 6 municipalities trained in FY12 and FY13	102	51	51	19	28	4
	100%	50,00%	50,00%	18,63%	27,45%	3,92%
% from the total number of trained teachers (37) from the first three municipalities trained in FY12 and FY13	37	19	18	7	9	3
	100%	51,35%	48,65%	18,92%	24,32%	8,11%
% from the total number of trained teachers (65) from the second three municipalities trained in FY12	65	32	33	12	19	1
	100%	49,23%	50,77%	18,46%	29,23%	1,54%

Teachers reported on the implementation of the WBL program during the **focus groups** discussions:

1) Implementation of the program

Teachers find WBL as very similar to the existing Practical instruction subject when it comes to its content; however, the difference is seen in the higher level of structure, organization and documenting evidence, as well as in the increasing of the quality of the process. For example, the mentoring of the students by a company employee is a novelty that ensures higher quality of the implementation of the work-based learning. In the same direction are the forms and agreements that the student, the teacher and the mentor need to use in order to document the learning process. The self-assessment tools help the students to learn about their strengths and weaknesses and how to improve them. Moreover, the students are actively involved in every stage the process – starting from the identification of possible companies, through planning the visit and implementing it. They learnt how to write a letter to a company requesting a practical experience, how to discuss with an employer and how to select and focus on the processes/jobs in the company they are most interested in.

2) Benefit from the program

All teachers assess this program as very useful, because it prepares the students for real work conditions and for job search; it increases the self-confidence in the students, students feel more courage instead of fear when it comes to applying for a job; they discover which skills they own; and learn that they could fit in many different jobs and not only in the one that is most directly related to their vocation.

Through the company visits and other work-based learning forms, the students learn more about the existing profiles within their vocation, technologies and equipment at the workplace.

3) Challenges related to the implementation of the program

The implementation of the WBL program faces several challenges reported by most of the teachers. Firstly, it is the lack of time for implementation of the free classes - same as with the WRS free classes' implementation, it is very difficult to organize the classes that are not part of the regular schedule because of the travel arrangements of the students and because of the lengthy daily schedules. This problem is overcome when the teachers work with entire class, so they do not have to combine students from different classes with different daily schedules. However, the best solution for this, suggested by the teachers is to include these classes in the regular schedule. Also, the implementation of the practical work in the company asks for more time to arrive at the company and to implement the activities, so the students cannot attend the classes during the day when they visit the company.

Secondly, most of the teachers say that it is very difficult to establish a meaningful cooperation with the employers. Most often the company visits are implemented based on personal contacts of the teacher or student. But, even when they succeed to establish the collaboration, the opportunities that the companies offer to the students for work-based learning are only the basics, such as observation of a work place. The employers are reluctant when asked to involve the students in a more meaningful practical experience, such as including them in the production process where they could work with the machines and technologies fearing that they might damage the expensive equipment. Teachers suggest that the companies need to have certain benefits when receiving students, which should be regulated by the responsible institutions.

The third difficulty the teachers face during the implementation of the program are the costs related to the implementation of the program activities, such as the travel costs to the company and photocopying. Most of the companies are outside of the city so they spend more time and money when taking students there. Also, the program requires filling in many forms that need to be printed/copied.

More information about the implementation of the WRS and WBL programs was gained from the **observation of the classes**. They were observed by VET advisors, master facilitators for both programs. Their assessments are summarized in the Table 21.

Table 21. Observation assessment of free classes for WRS and WBL curriculum

Observation aspects:	Average score ¹¹	
	WRS	WBL
The facilitator practices an interactive approach	4,24	4,78
The facilitator asks questions that prompt a constructive discussion	4,03	4,44
The teacher gives clear directions	3,97	4,22
The teacher plans the time required for working	3,83	4,00
All the students are encouraged to participate	3,90	4,44
An atmosphere of collaboration and peer learning is encouraged	3,93	4,67
The teacher assigns activities in accordance with the module, and the appropriate methods and techniques for teaching are implemented	4,24	4,00
The facilitator states the skills and knowledge which the students should obtain at the end of the session	3,71	3,78
At the beginning of the session link to the previous session is made	4,21	4,00
At the end of the session, the main issues are recapped, hence, the students repeat what they have learned, and the facilitator checks their level of understanding	3,29	4,00
Real examples are being used	4,48	4,78
The students get all necessary working materials	4,38	3,83
The students used the self-evaluation instruments at the beginning and the end of the module	4,05	NA
At the end of the training the students would have created a personal portfolio in which the improvement of their skills and knowledge can be noticed	3,35	NA

After the observation of the classes a general assessment was given by one of the observers, an Advisor at the VET Center, for the classes he observed:

There is a general finding that the classes for the WRS and WBL programs are implemented with higher quality and are better organized compared to the realization of the other programs during the free classes. However, there are some aspects that need to be improved in the future:

- There are no students' portfolios or they have been incomplete (although they are obligatory), thus there is no evidence for tracking the students' progress.
- In some schools the free classes are not written down in the grade book and the absence of the students is not registered.
- The schedule for the implementation of the activities is rarely made public, although it is regulated as such.
- The collaboration among the teachers that are part of the YES Network activities is not sufficient. It is recommended to work on strengthening the collaboration among the teachers who implement the YES Network programs and also to continuously involve other teachers from the school.
- Part of the teachers who implement WRS and WBL programs during free classes, already have full schedule, but still implement them because of their personal motivation for the Project to succeed. It is recommended to disseminate the training for WRS and WBL programs to new teachers in the schools.
- Almost all teachers who implement the free classes report on having students late for the classes (that are scheduled before the regular classes) because of the organized transportation.

¹¹ Average score out of five (1 represents the lowest, and 5 the highest score for the aspect observed)

INDICATOR 4.3: NUMBER OF CURRICULA DEVELOPED BY YES NETWORK PROJECT ADOPTED BY THE RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS.

KEY FINDINGS

All programs, Work readiness skills, Work-based learning and Career planning, were developed during the previous project years and were adopted by the VET Center. During FY 2014, two of them, WRS and WBL were adapted to be used in groups of youth including youth with disabilities. These programs were specifically adapted for use in the schools, in ESA centers and NGOs/DPOs. Subsequently, TOTs were implemented for each of the programs.

INDICATOR 4.4: NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETING THE ELECTIVE COURSES BASED ON THE NEW CURRICULA (WRS, WBL AND CP)

KEY FINDINGS

A total of 1740 students completed the WRS and 958 the WBL programs during elective (free) classes.

Findings related to the WRS program:

Based on the **school reports** it is found that the WRS curriculum was implemented in all partner municipalities and the City of Skopje within a total of 38 secondary schools. A total of 1789 students (972 male and 817 female) participated in the curriculum as part of the “free classes”, while 9859 students received WRS content integration within the existing subjects. In the 1st group of municipalities (Bitola, Strumica and Tetovo) the highest numbers of student participants are registered. 721 students (374 male and 347 female) participated in the program through the “free classes” and 4861 students participated in WRS content integration within the existing subjects.

Table 22. Number of students participating in the WRS program

	1 st group of municipalities			2 nd group of municipalities			City of Skopje			All municipalities		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Number of students participating in WRS - “free” classes	374	347	721	241	277	518	357	193	550	972	817	1789
Number of students completing WRS - “free” classes	373	346	719	227	268	495	337	189	526	937	803	1740
Number of students participating in WRS - integration	2144	2717	4861	924	934	1858	1628	1512	3140	4696	5163	9859

In the focus groups discussion the students shared their experience and views regarding the implementation of the WRS program through the free classes.

1) Implementation of the program

Most of the students report that their expectations from the program were greatly exceeded – they expected another lecture-based program, but got highly interactive and dynamic experience. They find the program approach as very different from the regular classes in a positive way: teachers were more equal with students, they communicated more freely, gave examples and really cared the students will learn; there were no grades; there were no right and wrong answers so the students did not fear of making a mistake; everyone could share their own opinion; the classes were interactive; they worked in groups, discussed and did simulations.

Most of the students were mostly impressed by the role of the teacher during these classes and their keen dedication to the program and the students (they were very familiar with the program, they tried to include each student, they were not strict but were determined their students to learn well, they were friendly to the students). Probably as a result of this, all students actively participated in the activities.

2) Benefit from the program

Students number many benefits from the participation in the WRS program: now they know how to represent themselves to the future employer (can write a CV and a motivation letter; can perform a job interview); have acquired knowledge and skills that will be very useful in various life situations in the future; have increased self-confidence; are able to give advice to others regarding employment.

3) Challenges related to the implementation of the program

Some students report on two main challenges for the implementation of the program: (1) the overburdened schedule and the fatigue they feel when they have to stay for eight classes a day; (2) the transportation of the students who come from remote places.

Findings related to the WBL program:

The school reports provide data which shows that during the past school year the WBL curriculum was implemented in the first two groups of municipalities i.e. six municipalities in total. The teachers from Skopje completed their training in January 2014 and will start the implementation of the program with the students in the following school year (September 2014/June 2015). The teachers from the second group of municipalities managed to deliver the curriculum to 647 students within the “free classes” as opposed to the 335 students encompassed by teachers from the first group of municipalities. Regarding integration both municipality groups managed similar results which combine for a total of 1181 students (600 male and 581 female) who received WBL content through integration within the existing subjects.

Table 23. Number of students participating in the WBL program

	1 st group of municipalities			2 nd group of municipalities			Total FY 2014		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Number of students participating in WBL during “free” classes	190	145	335	374	273	647	564	418	982
Number of students completing WBL during “free” classes	190	145	335	361	262	623	551	407	958
Number of students participating in WBL through integration of content within the subjects	316	285	601	284	296	580	600	581	1181

Here follows a focus groups reporting on the implementation of the WBL program.

1) **Implementation of the program**

Students express very positive opinions about the implementation of the program. They describe the role of the teacher in the same way as they described it for the WRS program (friendlier, dedicated, engaging). They learned in an interactive and practical way, unlike the regular classes. They have implemented most of the work-based learning forms, which they assess as very useful opportunities for learning new things. They had very positive experience in the companies, mainly because they could see the theory in practice, received feedback from the employers and generally had very positive feeling.

2) **Benefit from the program**

Most of the students say that the program is very useful for preparing them for the future job. All of them say that the practical experience in the companies gave them the chance to see if the vocation that they are preparing for is the right one for them and if they would like to change it. They got much useful information from the employers regarding their future work and job search.

3) **Challenges**

Some students inform that even though they had benefit from the visit of the company they would like to be included in the process in order to learn more. They also report that the collaboration with the company was made possible only where the teachers had personal contact with the employer. They think that the employers need to be better informed and the collaboration with them needs to be improved.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IR1: DEMAND-SUPPLY LABOR EXCHANGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IMPROVED THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE

Conclusions

All seven partnering municipalities have established local bodies for public-private dialogue – six of them have Economic and Social Councils and Prilep has Economic Council. All of them actively participated in the capacities building activities provided by the YES Network Project. The level of their functioning differs from each other. A higher level functioning is observed where the leadership is stronger and more dedicated, such as the example of Prilep, where the Mayor is president of the LEC and participates in all its activities; and Skopje where the LESC president together with the municipal representatives take a serious lead and have demonstrated proactive and determined attitude.

Shared challenge among the LESC is the low level of motivation on the part of the members outside of the Municipality, which might be coming from the low awareness level for leading and participating in such democratic process, as the public-private dialogue. All LESC still need support from the YES Network, to initiate and lead the public-private dialogue on issues related to the demand-supply labor exchange.

Recommendations

YES Network continues to support the LESC in their forming and advancing process of public-private dialogue. This support could be offered in a form of facilitation of the process of taking initiatives for more meaningful dialogue and for creating written recommendations to the Municipal Council for improving the demand-supply labor exchange at the local level.

Also, the support could be provided by networking among the LESC in the country and with other LESC from the region.

IR2: CAPACITIES OF NGOS AND DPOS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN YOUTH (INCLUDING YWDS) STRENGTHENED

Conclusion

In each of the seven partner municipalities there are NGOs and/or DPOs facilitators who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools for implementation of the Work readiness skills program, adapted for inclusion of youth with disabilities. The first results from this capacity building endeavors were seen in Skopje, where three inclusive groups of trainees successfully participated in the inclusive program, followed by eight employments.

Even though the NGOs and DPOs provide high quality training to the young people that are out of the system, they do not have assured finances for implementing the WRS workshops, which risks the sustainability of this part of the project achievements.

Recommendations

- YES Network to continue supporting the local NGOs and DPOs implement inclusive WRS workshops on a local level.
- To create links between the non-governmental sector and the municipalities in order to secure sustainability of the inclusive workshops by the NGOs and DPOs.

IR3: CAPACITIES OF ESA CENTERS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN YOUTH (INCLUDING YWDS) STRENGTHENED

Conclusions

The capacities of ESA Centers for development of employability skills in youth, including youth with disabilities have been strengthened throughout this year with new knowledge and skills on career planning, use of assistive technology and inclusive WRS program. Also, all seven Job clubs were upgraded with a set of assistive technology for use by youth with disabilities in inclusive groups. It is expected that the technology will be used during the next fiscal year. The job clubs are also used for other ESA programs and activities, such as the implementation of the Active labor market measures. However, Job Clubs have not allocated budget for implementation of the WRS workshops and will still need external support.

Only the Job Club in Prilep functions with a lower capacity, because of the lack of internal human resources.

Recommendations

- To strengthen facilitation skills where necessary or to support the facilitation of the workshops with external facilitators.
- To assure the implementation of the WRS, WBL and CP programs in inclusive groups and the use of the assistive technology whenever it is possible.

IR4: RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND VET CENTER INCREASED, INCLUDING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Conclusions

Professional development of teachers in the area of workforce development was provided continuously during this year. Teachers got training in inclusive Work readiness skills and Work-based learning programs, as well as in Assistive technology. Also, new groups of teachers have been trained in Career planning program. They were supported through the mentoring sessions and visited in class by the VET advisors. Their experience in the implementation of both programs is very positive, because of the observed benefits for the students. However, they continue to face the same challenges as the previous years, all related to organizational and resources factors, such as students' transportation, financial support for providing the needed materials for the activities, overloaded schedules. Because of this, preferred approach for implementation of the programs with the students is the integration of the activities in the existing subjects. Specific challenges related to the full implementation of the WBL curriculum are the resources needed for its implementation in the companies (transportation costs and extra time) and the willingness of the employers to collaborate.

Recommendations

- To identify on the municipal and the school level the most appropriate approaches for each school to implement the curricula with the students taking into account the organizational and financial challenges.
- To identify ways of cooperation between schools and employers for successful implementation of the Work-based learning curriculum.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 1	YES M&E Plan_ Indicators' table
Appendix 2	WRS post-evaluation questionnaires_ ALL
Appendix 3	WBL post-evaluation questionnaires_ ALL
Appendix 4	WRS Focus groups guides _ALL
Appendix 5	WBL Focus groups guides _ALL
Appendix 6	LESC_ Interview questions form
Appendix 7	WRS workshop observation form_ ESA
Appendix 8	WRS class observation form_ Secondary schools
Appendix 9	WBL class observation form_ Secondary schools
Appendix 10	WRS implementation_ School reports Form
Appendix 11	WBL implementation_ School reports Form
Appendix 12	Employment reporting form
Appendix 13	Focus groups reports summary